Charles H. Drago
Armstrong, Ellington & Parker
12 Stephen Hopkins Court
Providence, RI 02904

7/9/90

Dear Mr. Drago,

Our price list is enclosed. It happens that we do have a copy of Oswald in New Orleans, not perfect but good condition. We do not often get copies and the cost is much too high, so whether or not you decide to get it, please do not let anyone know that from time to time we do have copies. I try to reserve the few we get for those who have serious interests. The price if $26.00, including insured mail.

I do not recall any Italian angles and I do not believe there ever was any substantial reason even to suspect one. Before you spend time chasing wild geese, I'll try to explain.

I've not read everything the Warren Commission deposited in the National Archives but years ago I went through it rather well. Later I filed a series of Freedom of Information lawsuits as a result of which I have about a third of a million pages of records that were originally withheld. I've not read every word of them because of health reverses but I didn't miss a page in the Dallas or New Orleans records I got from the FBI. Dallas was "office of origin," as the FBI structures its work. This means that all investigatory leads and information were routed to it. It in turn routed to FBIHQ. New Orleans was virtually a second Office of Origin. What I've gotten includes all the FBIHQ "main" files on the case, Oswald, Ruby, etc. And I recall no reference to any Italian investigation.

I am not familiar with the book you refer to but I have doubts about its dependability when you say the FBI agent "was seconded under diplomatic cover to the U.S. Embassy in Rome." He did not need any cover and I'm sure he had none. Not without the assent of the Italian government. Our FBI is supposed not to be operative in foreign countries. We do have officially recognized and open, not under cover, FBI agents in some. They are known as "legal attache" and they have, essentially, liaison roles. For years we've had a legal attache in Rome.

I can't imagine that there was any investigation of the kind you suggest in Italy without the FBI making and disclosing records relating to it and they haven't or I'd have seen them in the Dallas files. Which, by the way, like all else I got under FOIA, you are welcome to examine and copy.

The more irrelevant any report was the more diligently the FBI investigated it. Its answer to everything is statistics and they were lavish in generating paper the pages of which they counted and boasted of. They also disclosed all the baseless reports because that not only made them look diligent, it also tended to support their preconceived conclusions. I can't begin to estimate how very many of these there were. Many!!

Possibly what the agent you refer to was referring to had to do with the mafia. The FBI knew very well that the mafia was not in any way connected with the crime and the tips it got relating to the mafia were disclosed to me. Up to and including the time of the House assassins committee. There is no reason to believe that there was any mafia connection and the books commercializing utter nonsense are dishonest and otherwise undependable. I've read them.

There is no practical limit to the theories people can conceive and believe but we do know enough about the crime to eliminate. Going into this would take much time but if you are ever near here, about an hour from either Baltimore or Washington, I'll take the time and you can go over the records of which I made separate copies for subject filing. I kept the records exactly as I received them for archival purposes but I did in a number of instances make duplicate copies for this subject file.

Dallas had a special index, in addition to its all-encompassing "ge neral" index. It was about 40 lineqr feet of 3x5 cards and with the exception of a few pages that were withheld under the law I have it. You are welcome to exmine it, too. This special index was made, I am confident, to give the FBI a handle on what was made available to the commission. I'm sorry I'm not able to do this checking for you because of my medical limitations. But I am confident that there is nothing at all to the Italian alleged connection.

However, it is not impossible that at some point the FBI decided to check with Italian authorities on some of the names that may have been bruited about in these baseless notions of an Italian connection. At the same time, the proper procedure would have been for them to go to Dallas and then be routed to HQ and any other field offices the Dallas office thought should have been informed. I recall nothing at all like that.

If you would like any further opinion, send me a xerox of the page or pages you refer to an I'll respond further.

From what I've said I think you see that I have no suggestions for any questions to be asked of this former FBI agent.

Come to think of it, of course there was an investigation - of the Mannlicher-Carcanno rifle allegedly used in the crime. But all that did was get the history of that particular rifle, its manufacture, licensing, etc. All of this was disclosed and was summarized by the commission in its publication and is available in its files.

Best wishes,

Harold Weisberg

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